

## INTRODUCTION

As of the writing of this chapter in 2022, the COVID-19 pandemic has persisted for over two years. The initial economic impact of the pandemic had been felt all over Door County, the state, and the country as businesses closed their doors and workers were laid off. The State of Wisconsin experienced an initial increase of 16.2% in the unemployment rate and decline in state GDP, -26.6%. The University of Wisconsin-Madison Center for Research on the Wisconsin Economy (CROWE) conducted economic and health index studies in 2020 to measure the initial impacts of the COVID-19 on each county in the state. They gave Door County an economic rank of 54th out of 72 counties, falling in the bottom half of the state. CROWE also estimated the change in unemployment rates by county; Door County's unemployment rate is estimated to have increased by approximately 15% at the beginning of the pandemic. County residents were highly impacted, many receiving stimulus checks from the American Rescue Plan. In addition to individual \$1,400 stimulus checks, Door County municipalities received a combined total of nearly \$2.8 million and the County of Door government received approximately \$5.37 million in relief funds.

Despite the negative economic impacts COVID-19 initially had on the county, and the state as a whole, economic recovery and fiscal bounce-back was relatively quick, with the unemployment rate dropping to 3.9% (pre-pandemic levels) by April 2021. Door County's economy also has come back around through various grants, loan funds, and other economic growth initiatives, and because of the strong tourism industry persisting even through 2020 and 2021.

This chapter provides state, regional, and county economic characteristics and trends. State and regional background information is presented first, followed by county information regarding major industries, occupations, and employers; personal income and earnings; labor force characteristics, including educational attainment, labor force participation and unemployment rates, and commuting patterns; and business and industry (re)development initiatives. Lastly, information is provided regarding environmentally contaminated sites tracked by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR), in order to evaluate and promote the use of environmentally contaminated sites for commercial or industrial uses.

Since economic development issues are substantially intertwined with population, housing, and land use issues, readers may also want to review Resource Report Chapter 2, Issues and Opportunities, Chapter 4, Housing, and Chapter 10, Land Use, which all contain information relevant to the economic development information described in this chapter. Also, as stated in the housing chapter, there are different agencies that use different methods to collect data at different times, so figures in these chapters often can serve only as guides to trends or issues.

## STATE AND REGIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### STATE BACKGROUND INFORMATION

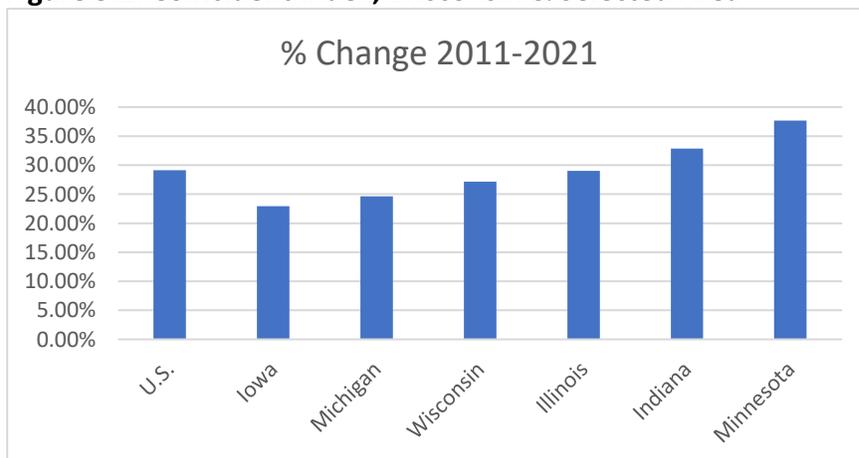
#### GENERAL INFORMATION

Per Capita Income (PCI), or income per person, is the mean income within an economic aggregate, such as a county or city, and is calculated by taking a measure of all sources of income in the aggregate and dividing it by the total population. In economic evaluation, PCI is used as a measure of the wealth of an area and often compared to neighboring areas or same type jurisdiction. In 2020, Wisconsin’s PCI of \$34,450 was 97.36% of the nation’s PCI of \$35,384, ranking the state 21 in the nation; better than Indiana, Iowa, and Michigan, but worse than Illinois and Minnesota.

Another way to compare economic health between states is to look at the coincident index, which summarizes economic conditions in a single statistic. The Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia produces a monthly coincidence index for each of the 50 states by combining four common state-level indicators: nonfarm payroll employment, average hours worked in manufacturing, the unemployment rate, and wage and salary disbursements deflated by the consumer price index. Each state’s index trend is set to the trend of its gross domestic product (GDP), so long-term growth in the state’s index also matches long-term growth in its GDP. These index numbers are released monthly, a few days after the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) releases state employment data. More information regarding the coincident index methodology can be found at the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia’s website listed in the Resources and Further Information section at the end of this chapter. National coincident indexes are produced by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

Figure 5.1 below shows the change in coincident indexes for Wisconsin and surrounding states, and for the United States. Over the ten-year period between December 2011 and December 2021, Wisconsin’s index increased from 101.95 to 129.63, or by 27.15%, compared to 29.12% for the United States overall. For the same timeframe, Wisconsin’s index lagged behind Illinois (29.03%), Indiana (32.83%), and Minnesota (37.69%), but performed better than Michigan (24.62%). Iowa fared the worst, with a 22.96% increase.

**Figure 5.1: Coincident Index, Wisconsin & Selected Area**



Source: Philadelphia Reserve Bank, State Coincident Index, 2022. St. Louis Reserve Bank, National Coincident Index, 2022.

### **WISCONSIN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

In January of 2011, under the governorship of Scott Walker, the Wisconsin Legislature via Act 7 created the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), a public-private authority that replaced the Wisconsin Department of Commerce. The mission of the WEDC is to “strategically deploy financial resources and technical assistance to invest in Wisconsin to enhance its assets and opportunities, and to address underinvestment and distress.” Under Act 7, Commerce’s economic and community development functions were transferred to WEDC and contracts from other departments, primarily related to community and economic development, were also transferred to WEDC. The regulatory functions of Commerce, along with the Department of Regulation and Licensing, were merged into a new state agency called the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS). Now the lead economic development organization in the state, WEDC is charged with:



Pictured: Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) logo  
Source: WEDC

- Developing and implementing economic programs to provide business support, expertise, and financial assistance to companies that are investing and creating jobs in Wisconsin;
- Supporting new business start-ups and business expansion and growth in Wisconsin; and
- Developing and implementing any other programs related to economic development in Wisconsin.

### **WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) supports the WEDC with its mission to advance Wisconsin’s economy and business climate by empowering and supporting the workforce. The DWD conducts research and data analysis in order to identify issues and trends that influence the state’s employment picture. In addition, its Office of Economic Advisors produces reports on the state’s employment picture. In addition, its Office of Economic Advisors produces reports on the state’s workforce outlook, such as regional employment projections, discussed in the next section. The DWD also provides training and employment assistance to people looking for work, while working with employers on finding the necessary workers to fill current job openings.

### **REGIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

This section discusses the Census industry employment estimates for Door County and the DWD industry employment projections for the Bay Area, regional plans and strategies for northeast Wisconsin and the lakeshore area, and regional economic development and adult education partnerships.

### **INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS**

The DWD developed projections through the year 2028 for the Bay Area, a ten-county region in northeast Wisconsin, including Door County. (See Table 5.1.) These projections are categorized by industry, a group of establishments that produce similar products or provide similar services. The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) groups similar establishments into industries. For example, all establishments that manufacture automobiles are in the same industry. An establishment is generally a single physical location where services are provided or goods are produced. Examples of establishments include a factory, mine, store, or office. Table 5.1 displays information compiled by the DWD based on the NAICS codes and customized for the Bay Area region. Other tables in this chapter that give industry information specific to Door County will list either super-sectors, the largest categorization of industries, or two-digit sectors, the second largest categorization, per the standard NAICS classification system.

**Table 5.1: Bay Area Workforce Development Area Industry Employment Projections**

Industry	2018 Estimate	2028	#	%
		Projection	Change	Change
Construction	21,695	23,966	2,271	10.47%
Education & Health Services	78,355	84,076	5,721	7.30%
Financial Activities	24,892	25,722	830	3.33%
Government	22,362	22,490	128	0.57%
Information	3,482	3,100	-382	-10.97%
Leisure & Hospitality	41,886	42,537	651	1.55%
Manufacturing	93,461	91,351	-2,110	-2.26%
Natural Resources & Mining	5,277	5,554	277	5.25%
Profession & Business Services	40,144	44,203	4,509	10.11%
Self Employed & Unpaid Family Workers	21,132	23,205	2,073	9.81%
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	80,700	83,226	2,526	3.13%
Other Services	24,236	25,021	785	3.24%

Source: WI DWD, Labor Market Information: Industry Projections 2018-2028, January 2022.

Within the Bay Area region, the largest increase in number of jobs through 2028 is expected to be in Education and Health Services, with a projected increase of 5,721 jobs, or a 7.30% growth rate. The next largest job increase is expected to be in Profession & Business Services, with an additional 4,509 jobs, or a 10.11% growth rate. The third highest increase in number of jobs is projected to be in Trade, Transportation, and Utilities, with an additional 2,526 jobs, or a 3.13% growth rate. The largest decrease in number of jobs is expected to take place in the Manufacturing sector, with a loss of 2,110 jobs, or a decrease of 2.26%.

The highest growth rate is expected to be in the Construction sector, at 10.47%, or an increase of 2,271 jobs.

## REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND STRATEGIES

### Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission - Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

In order to be considered a designated Economic Development District (EDD) by the US Economic Development Administration (EDA), an area must complete a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). In 2017, the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission updated its CEDS, analyzing the region's strengths and weakness, and creating goals surrounding job generation, economic diversification, and increased economic growth. These goals include:

1. Encourage and support business, business development, and entrepreneurship.
2. Maintain and strengthen infrastructure and the community, county, and regional levels.
3. Support and address regional workforce development and attraction issues.
4. Support quality-of-life, community, and cultural amenities as an economic development tool.
5. Continue working with economic development professionals to improve coordination.

The 2017 CEDS plan lists nine different projects for Door County across the areas of recreation, infrastructure, design/public utility, and planning.

### **Regional Partnerships**

There are eight partnerships working to promote economic development and adult education for the northeast Wisconsin area, as well as a new lakeshore industry cluster area.

- *NEW North, Inc.* New North consists of an 18-county region in northeast Wisconsin, including Door County. This consortium of business, economic development, chambers of commerce, workforce development, civic, non-profit, and education leaders is working to make northeast Wisconsin a more competitive region for job growth, while still maintaining a superior quality of life.
- *Northeast Wisconsin Regional Economic Partnership (NEWREP).* NEWREP provides hands-on support and programming for existing and prospective businesses in the northeast Wisconsin area. NEWREP membership offers: community-specific economic development programs; access to workforce and training programs; information about local buildings, sites, industrial/commercial parks; financing program support and technical direction; technical support for business development projects; local advocacy and liaison for resident and new business investment; and community and state program liaison.
- *Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission.* The BLRPC region was designated by the US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration as an Economic Development District in 1979. An EDA invests in public works, and provides economic assistance, technical assistance, and short-term planning. EDA investments are intended to enhance regional competitiveness and support long-term diversification and development of the regional economy. Eligible EDA applicants are states, city and local governments, Indian Tribes, colleges and universities, nonprofit organizations, and economic development districts
- *Northeast Wisconsin Consortium of Adult Education (NEWCAE).* Established in 2002, NEWCAE is an association of area public and private colleges and universities. In collaboration with business, industry, and other local community organizations, the

association offers services that encourage, promote, and provide higher and continuing education opportunities for adult learners.

- *Northeast Wisconsin Educational Resource Alliance (NEW ERA)*. NEW ERA fosters regional partnerships among the public colleges and universities in the northeast Wisconsin area to better serve the educational needs of the 1.2 million people living in this area.
- *Northeast Wisconsin (NEW) Manufacturing Alliance*. The NEW Manufacturing Alliance is a group of manufacturers working with educational institutions, workforce development boards, chambers of commerce, and state organizations to promote manufacturing in the northeast Wisconsin Area. Its vision is to unite manufacturers area and strengthen the area’s position as a world-leading region of advanced manufacturing opportunities. The Alliance’s four objectives are to:
  - Create a positive view of manufacturing careers in the area;
  - Grow partnerships with K-16, media, and other manufacturers;
  - Promote workforce development; and
  - Advance collaboration efforts that promote the health of manufacturing.
- *Bay Area Workforce Development Board, Inc.* The Bay Area Workforce Development Board consists of 10 counties, including Door County, and works to meet employers’ needs by increasing job skills and educational levels. The Workforce Development Board consists of 41 members, including business, education, labor, and economic development partners.
- *Lakeshore Industry Cluster Initiative*. The most recent of the previously described initiatives, the Lakeshore Industry Cluster includes Manitowoc, Door, Calumet, Kewaunee, and Sheboygan counties. Its purpose is to create regional industry cluster networks that engage businesses in analyzing and leveraging their assets and opportunities in order to create additional business growth and development. The Initiative focuses on identifying and targeting regional assets and resources to improve the competitiveness of the manufacturing, food processing/agriculture, energy, and tourism industries. The Initiative also evaluates how the Lakeshore region ranks against other communities.

## COUNTY-LEVEL INDUSTRIES, OCCUPATIONS, AND EMPLOYERS

### GENERAL ECONOMIC INFORMATION

*Note: all dollar values given are inflation adjusted to 2019.*

Door County’s economy has traditionally depended on the agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism industries. Largely, those industries are split into three general geographic areas within the county: manufacturing in the City of Sturgeon Bay/Central Door, agriculture in the south, and tourism in the north. Manufacturing has always been concentrated in the City of Sturgeon Bay, with very little in the southern and northern areas. Agriculture, especially dairy production, had been widespread throughout the county, though more recently it has declined drastically in Northern Door and somewhat Central Door; it remains predominant in Southern

Door. Northern Door County is much more tourism-oriented than the rest of the county, with agriculture continuing to decline and very little manufacturing present. The next section, Industry Sectors, discusses specific employment information for the manufacturing and tourism industries; agricultural employment information is not discussed because the industry agricultural data for Door County is suppressed.

### **MANUFACTURING/SHIPBUILDING**

Door County has a substantial manufacturing base that exports products, including water vessels, wire products, specialty machines, and marine service equipment. Shipbuilding has historically been the top revenue-producing manufacturing industry in the county and remains on top, despite a somewhat recent decline in demand for luxury and custom-built yachts. Bay Shipbuilding Company (owned by Italian parent company) is a well-established shipbuilding business employing a skilled labor force and forms the center of a shipbuilding “cluster.” A “cluster” is defined as a geographically neighboring group of organizations in a particular field linked by what they have in common and the ways in which they complement one another. Bay Shipbuilding forms the center of this cluster, with other companies in the area defining its extent. This cluster also includes the US Coast Guard, marinas, boat and ship maintenance and repair services, marine towing and salvage, marine design and engineering, and boat brokerage/sales.

Bay Shipbuilding is the largest employer in the county, employing nearly 700 people as of November 2021. Bay Shipbuilding absorbed a portion of the roughly 100 Palmer Johnson employees after the company decided to close its Sturgeon Bay facilities and move operations to Europe in 2015. Originally, Bay Shipbuilding built only freshwater vessels, but now builds a variety of ocean-going vessels, up to 1,000 feet in length, used along US coastlines. The company repairs a significant portion of the Great Lakes working vessel fleet, as well as Coast Guard vessels. In 2008, an Italian company, Fincantieri, purchased Manitowoc Marine Group, which includes Bay Shipbuilding Company. Shortly after, the Sturgeon Bay City Council approved a development agreement with Fincantieri Marine Group/Bay Shipbuilding Company that released \$6 million in state’s Harbor Assistance Program grant funds for the construction of a new floating dry dock. Most recently, Bay Shipbuilding has partnered with the Interlake Steamship Co. to build the first new US-built Great Lakes freighter in 40 years, at 639 feet.

### **TOURISM**

Tourism is a vital component of Door County’s economy; according to Destination Door County (DDC), 2.2 million visitors a year come to the county. Tourists visit Door County to take advantage of walking and biking trails, state and local parks and other natural areas, golf courses, historic sites, approximately 300 miles of coastal shoreline, commercial districts, and the arts community. Many businesses cater to tourism, such as resorts, motels, campgrounds, bed and breakfasts, and retail stores, and are continually expanding their services to meet the diverse interests of people coming to the county.



Pictured: Destination Door County (DDC) logo  
Source: DDC

The Wisconsin Department of Tourism’s Economic Impact Fact Sheet for Door County reported for 2021 that:

- Door County ranked 7<sup>th</sup> of all counties in the state for traveler spending at an estimated \$423 million, representing an increase of 39.05% from 2020. Nearly half (\$206.6 million) of visitor spending went toward lodging.
- Visitors to Door County supported 3,323 jobs, generating a total labor income of \$102.5 million for these jobs.
- Visitors to Door County generated \$42.7 million in state and local taxes.

### **Tourism Marketing and Destination Door County**

A room tax is the top funding mechanism for tourism promotion and marketing across the country. In states that have adopted enabling legislation, municipalities have the authority to apply a room tax on the renting of sleeping rooms at hotels, motels, resorts, inns, bed and breakfasts, and other lodging facilities in the local area, if state regulations are followed. In Wisconsin, municipalities can set the tax rate from 0 - 8%, with limited exceptions. A single municipality may adopt the tax or multiple municipalities can band together to create a tourism “zone.” A tourism zone must be overseen by a “tourism commission,” governed by representatives from the participating municipalities.



Pictured: Door County Tourism Zone Commission (TZC) logo  
Source: TZC

All of Door County’s 19 municipalities have partnered to operate as a tourism zone, governed by the Door County Tourism Zone Commission (TZC), and, as of January 2022, charge an 8.0% room tax. Created in 2007 by an intergovernmental agreement, the TZC is responsible for issuing the lodging permits, collecting the room tax, preparing and delivering all required reports, contracting with a marketing entity (Destination Door County), approving marketing plans, and reviewing performance measurements. All lodging establishments in Door County with rentals less than 30 days are required to charge the room tax, which periodically gets paid to the TZC.

State law requires that at least 70% of room tax money is spent on tourism promotion and development, with the remaining revenue going to participating municipalities to spend however they wish. Door County’s intergovernmental agreement splits the total tax into 30% and 70% shares, with 30% going to the member municipalities and 70% going to the TZC for tourism marketing and operations.

The TZC can keep up to 4% for operating expenses, but at least 66% must go to Destination Door County for their marketing and operating expenses. In 2021, the Commission collected nearly \$7.3 million in room tax. Other figures and statistics for 2021, as published by the TZC, are listed below:

- Over 40% of the total room tax collected was earned in the months of July and August.

- The month of July had the highest number of rooms available for rent, at 147,215 units, and 119,103 of those units were filled for an occupancy rate of 80.90%.
- The month of August had the highest occupancy rate, at 81.05%, with 139,504 units available and 113,072 units filled.
- The highest average nightly rate for a room was \$233.12 in August.

As the county's official tourism marketing organization, Destination Door County's mission is to "generate incremental economic impact for the community by attracting visitors with strategies that ensure sustainable tourism." In 2019, DDC published their 2020-2022 Strategic Plan which outlines the organization's goals to shift from destination marketing to destination management. This switch aims to minimize the environmental and social impacts of tourism in the county, while also maximizing the economic impacts. The plan contains the following five imperatives:

1. Optimize economic impact through visitor expenditures
2. Support and empower Door County's tourism industry
3. Strengthen destination image
4. Enhance the visitor experience
5. Provide sufficient returns given available resources

DDC, in conjunction with the TZC, updated this Strategic Plan for the year 2023. The 2023 plan's vision, mission, and promise are provided below. A link to the entire plan can be found at the end of this Chapter in the Resources and Further Information section.

*Vision: "A better life for all of Door County through strong, sustainable practices supported by local communities that welcome a diverse group of explorers."*

*Mission: "To inspire travel that drives community enhancement. Through innovation and partnerships, we will share stories of Door County's people and places, deliver world-class experiences, strengthen the industry, work to ensure all travelers feel welcome and preserve Door County's way of life and its natural resources."*

*Promise: "We will promote travel to Door County in a way that aims to minimize the environmental and social impact while maximizing economic impact. We strive to foster a local sense of place to ensure quality of life for residents that creates a positive impact on the county."*

## **AGRICULTURE**

Discussed in further detail in Chapter 7, Agricultural Resources, Door County has a long history in agriculture, most notably in dairy and grain crops. Dairy production is in decline, though it continues to contribute the most to the county's agricultural economy. Cherry production also continues to decline, but the county is experiencing some renewed growth in apple production, as well as advancing in other specialty crops such as cold-climate wine grapes. Some wineries are starting to use local grapes for wine-making, but the growing of grapes in the county is still

in an experimental stage. Cherries and other fruit are now more frequently used in the production of locally grown and produced wines and ciders.

### **Economic Impact**

Agriculture is an important economic activity in Door County, with hundreds of family-owned farms and agriculture-related businesses and industries providing equipment, services, and other products farmers need to process, market, and deliver food to consumers. Approximately 96% of farms in Door County are owned by individuals or families. The production, sales, and processing of Door County's farm products generate employment, economic activity, income, and tax revenue.

According to the 2022 Census of Agriculture, Door County sold approximately 108.8 million in agricultural products. The agricultural product categories listed below had the top five highest dollar amounts in market value.

- Milk, \$55.2
- Grain, \$27.2
- Nursery & greenhouse, \$7.0
- Fruits, nuts, berries, \$6.8
- Cattle & calves, \$6.1

**INDUSTRY SECTOR INFORMATION**

Table 5.2 provides an overview of the number of establishments, number of paid employees, average annual wage, and total annual payroll for each two-digit industry sector in Door County for 2021, as estimated by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). The data consists of employment and wages reported to federal unemployment insurance programs and represents about 99.7% of all wage and salary civilian employment in the county. Only filled jobs, whether full- or part-time, temporary or permanent, are counted. People working in Door County excluded from QCEW reporting requirements are self-employed workers, most agricultural workers on small farms, and members of the US Coast Guard.

**Table 5.2: Industry Sectors, Door County**

Industry Sector	# Estab. (Ann. Ave.)	# Employees (Monthly Ave.)	Wage (Ann. Ave.)
Agriculture	S	S	S
Construction	122	682	\$57,663
Education & Health Services	126	2,200	\$49,775
Financial Activities	92	356	\$46,958
Information	21	122	\$36,019
Leisure & Hospitality	284	2,519	\$23,717
Manufacturing	63	2,192	\$52,313
Natural Resources & Mining	24	198	\$32,359
Other Services	94	554	\$25,970
Professional & Business Services	165	596	\$39,137
Public Administration	36	906	\$35,406
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	309	2,398	\$32,394

Source: WI Department of Workforce Development, Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages, 2020.

S = Suppressed

### **Manufacturing Employment**

During the 1980s, manufacturing accounted for over 30% of the jobs in the county, mostly due to shipbuilding. Shipbuilding experienced an economic downturn in the 1990s, drastically reducing the number of manufacturing jobs in Door County. At the end of 2011, manufacturing jobs made up 14.4% of the total number of jobs in the county. As of 2020, it makes up 17.23% of all jobs in the county. Manufacturing ranks 4<sup>th</sup> in terms of number of employees, at 2,192 jobs, falling behind the Education & Health Services (2,200), Leisure & Hospitality (2,519), and Trade, Transportation, Utilities (2,398) sectors. (See Figure 5.2.)

Manufacturing continues to rank the highest in terms of payroll; approximately 23.02% of the total payroll for the county in 2020 was paid to manufacturing industry jobs. The 2020 average annual wage in manufacturing was \$52,313, the second highest average annual wage in Door County, with the construction sector ranking first, at \$57,663. Although these jobs are some of the highest paying in Door County, the county's manufacturing wages are only 85.7% of the state's average annual wage for manufacturing.

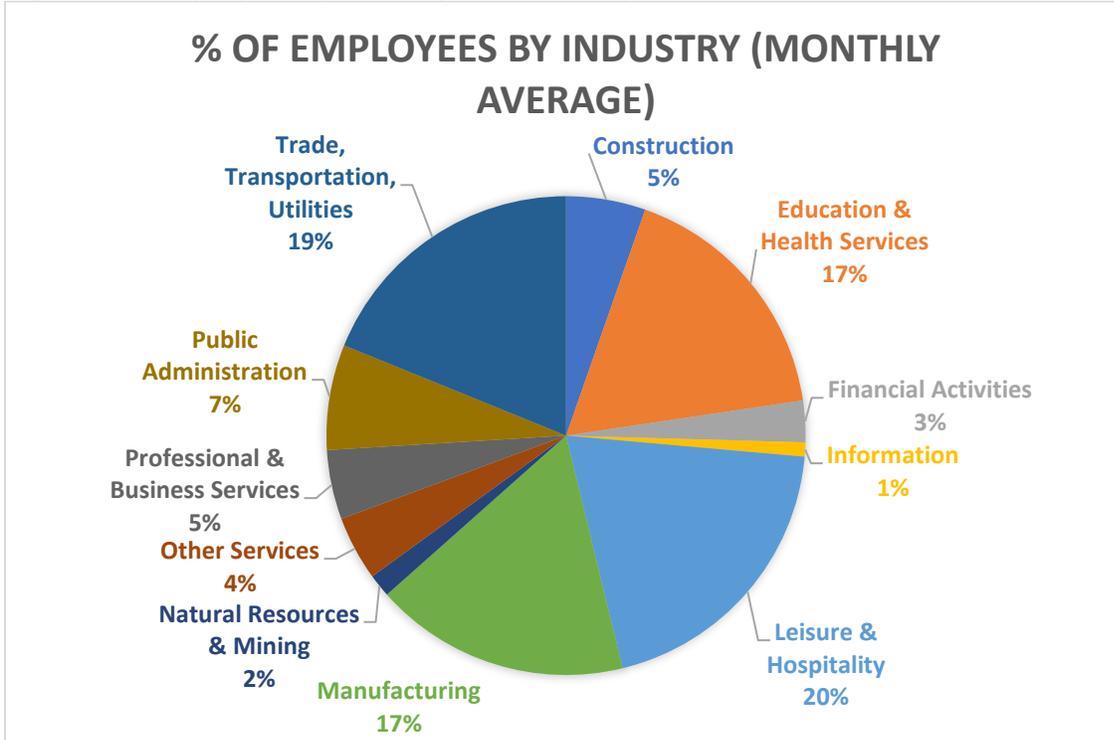
### **Tourism Employment**

While there is no "tourism" industry sector, there is a supersector called "Leisure and Hospitality" which includes sub-sectors of "Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation" and "Accommodation and Food Services." In Door County, leisure and hospitality jobs rank first in the total number of jobs, but employees earn far less than workers in other industries. In 2020, 19.80% of the total jobs in Door County were in leisure and hospitality (see Figure 5.2), but employees earned only 11.99% of the total payroll for the county. The average annual wage for leisure and hospitality jobs in 2021 was \$23,717 for Door County, 17.8% higher than the state average of \$20,125 for the same year.

Many jobs in this occupation are entry level, part-time, and seasonally based. Employers in this industry tend to be small: in Door County in 2006, there were an average of 12 workers per establishment. Thus, no leisure and hospitality business appear on the list of top fifteen employers discussed in a later section.

The "Retail Trade" industry sector is a subsector of the "Trade, Transportation, Utilities" supersector and is also closely connected to tourism. In 2020, there were 1,968 retail trade jobs, making up 15.47% of total number of jobs, but only 11.48% of total wages. Employees in retail trade earned an average wage of \$29,064, about 5.14% less than the state's average annual wage of \$30,639.

**Figure 5.2: Employees by Industry, Door County**



Source: WI Department of Workforce Development, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2020.

**Five-Year Employment Trends**

Door County industry information for 2015 and 2020 is provided in Table 5.3 below. Since 2015, the reported number of total establishments is down by 11 (0.82%) and the reported number of total jobs is down by 697 (5.19%).

**Table 5.3: Five-Year Change in Industry Sectors, Door County**

Industry Sector*	# Employees (monthly ave.)			% Change	# Establish- ments (annual ave.)			Total Wages		
	2015	2020			2015	2020	% Change	2015**	2020	% Change
Construction	602	682	13.29%	116	122	5.17%	\$29,485,689	\$39,325,911	33.37%	
Education & Health Services	2,234	2,200	-1.52%	88	126	43.18%	\$99,858,036	\$109,504,982	9.66%	
Financial Activities	460	356	-22.61%	92	92	0.00%	\$20,655,538	\$16,716,991	-19.07%	
Information	165	122	-26.06%	22	21	-4.55%	\$5,477,799	\$4,394,320	-19.78%	
Leisure & Hospitality	2,896	2,519	-13.02%	272	284	4.41%	\$55,794	\$59,743,638	7.08%	
Manufacturing	2,388	2,192	-8.21%	64	63	-1.56%	\$119,834,694	\$114,669,099	-4.31%	
Natural Resources & Mining	237	198	-16.46%	22	24	9.09%	\$7,133,504	\$6,407,160	-10.18%	
Other Services	700	554	-20.86%	99	94	-5.05%	\$14,424,795	\$14,387,323	-0.26%	
Professional & Business Services	506	596	17.79%	145	165	13.79%	\$19,062,840	\$23,325,605	22.36%	
Public Administration	937	906	-3.31%	34	36	5.88%	\$29,059,937	\$32,077,584	10.38%	
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	2,295	2,398	4.49%	393	309	-21.37%	\$68,129,088	\$77,681,059	14.02%	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>13,420</b>	<b>12,723</b>	<b>-5.19%</b>	<b>1,347</b>	<b>1,336</b>	<b>-0.82%</b>	<b>\$468,916,480</b>	<b>\$498,233,672</b>	<b>6.25%</b>	

Source: WI Department of Workforce Development, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2015 & 2020; US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Inflation Calculator.

\*Sector(s) not included: Agriculture, Unclassified.

\*\*Inflation-adjusted to 2020.

### AVERAGE ANNUAL WAGES

Average annual wages are estimated by calculating the sum of wages of all the employees in a given industry or occupation and then dividing the total wages by the number of employees. In 2020, the average annual wage was \$39,154 for Door County and \$53,819 for the state. Some of this gap can be attributed to the seasonality of much of the county’s economy, which requires fewer year-round, permanent positions and more temporary and contract labor than is typical for less seasonal areas.

Table 5.4 compares 2020 average annual wage for super-sectors by industry division between Door County, neighboring counties, and the state. Door County averages were less than state averages in all categories except for Leisure & Hospitality.

**Table 5.4: Average Annual Wage by Industry Division, Door County & Selected Areas**

Industry	State	Door Co.	Brown Co.	Kewaunee Co.	Door County, % of State
All Industries	\$53,819	\$39,154	\$55,153	\$42,319	72.75%
Construction	\$66,292	\$57,663	\$65,086	\$54,235	86.98%
Education & Health Services	\$53,283	\$49,775	\$55,463	\$38,366	93.42%
Financial Activities	\$80,333	\$46,958	\$71,634	\$52,920	58.45%
Information	\$86,433	\$36,019	\$60,911	S	41.67%
Leisure & Hospitality	\$20,125	\$23,717	\$35,489	\$11,020	117.85%
Manufacturing	\$61,039	\$52,313	\$59,689	\$49,240	85.70%
Natural Resources	\$41,981	\$32,359	\$44,823	\$41,933	77.08%
Other Services	\$36,105	\$25,970	\$28,861	S	71.93%
Professional & Business Services	\$67,201	\$39,137	\$67,040	\$54,899	58.24%
Public Administration	\$52,807	\$35,406	\$55,327	\$28,787	67.05%
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	\$45,531	\$32,394	\$47,088	\$45,858	71.15%
Unclassified	\$60,882	S	S	S	S

Source: WI Department of Workforce Development, *Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages, 2020*.

S = Suppressed

Table 5.5 compares average annual wages in Door County for 2015 and 2020. Overall, the average annual wage for all industries increased by 12.06% between 2015 and 2020. Average annual wages increased for all industry divisions. Average annual wage increased the most for “other services” (repair, cleaning, and personal care industries), at 26.03%, followed by a 23.10% increase in “leisure and hospitality,” and a 22.71% increase for “public administration.”

**Table 5.5: Average Annual Wage by Industry Division, Door County**

Industry	2015*	2020	% Change
All Industries	\$34,941	\$39,154	12.06%
Construction	\$48,980	\$57,663	17.73%
Education & Health Services	\$44,699	\$49,775	11.36%
Financial Activities	\$44,903	\$46,958	4.58%
Information	\$33,198	\$36,019	8.50%
Leisure & Hospitality	\$19,266	\$23,717	23.10%
Manufacturing	50,182	52,313	4.25%
Natural Resources	\$30,099	\$32,359	7.51%
Other Services	20,607	\$25,970	26.03%
Professional & Business Services	\$37,673	\$39,137	3.89%
Public Administration	\$28,854	\$35,406	22.71%
Trade, Transportation, Utilities	\$29,686	\$32,395	9.13%

Source: WI Department of Workforce Development, *Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages, 2015 & 2020*; US Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Inflation Calculator*.

\*Inflation-adjusted to 2020.

## **OCCUPATIONS**

An occupation is a set of activities or tasks that employees are paid to perform. Employees that perform essentially the same tasks are in the same occupation, whether or not they are in the same industry. A given industry, or even a particular establishment in that industry, might have employees in dozens of occupations.

Some occupations are concentrated in a few particular industries, while other occupations are found in the majority of industries. Note that since the DWD does not provide occupation information for Door County, the data provided in this section is from the US Census Bureau. Due to different definitions and methods of collecting data, the total for “employed persons” provided below cannot be compared to the total “number of employees” provided in the previous section.

Table 5.6 compares employed persons by occupation divisions for Door County for the years 2010 and 2020. According to the US Census Bureau, total employed persons in Door County declined by 6.16%, with decreases occurring in the “service,” “sales and office,” and “natural resources, construction, and maintenance” divisions, at -21.02%, -17.36%, and -14.20%, respectively. All other occupation divisions grew for the same timeframe, with the greatest increase occurring in the “production, transportation, and material moving” division, at 11.68%, followed by the “management, business, science, and arts” division, at 6.54%.

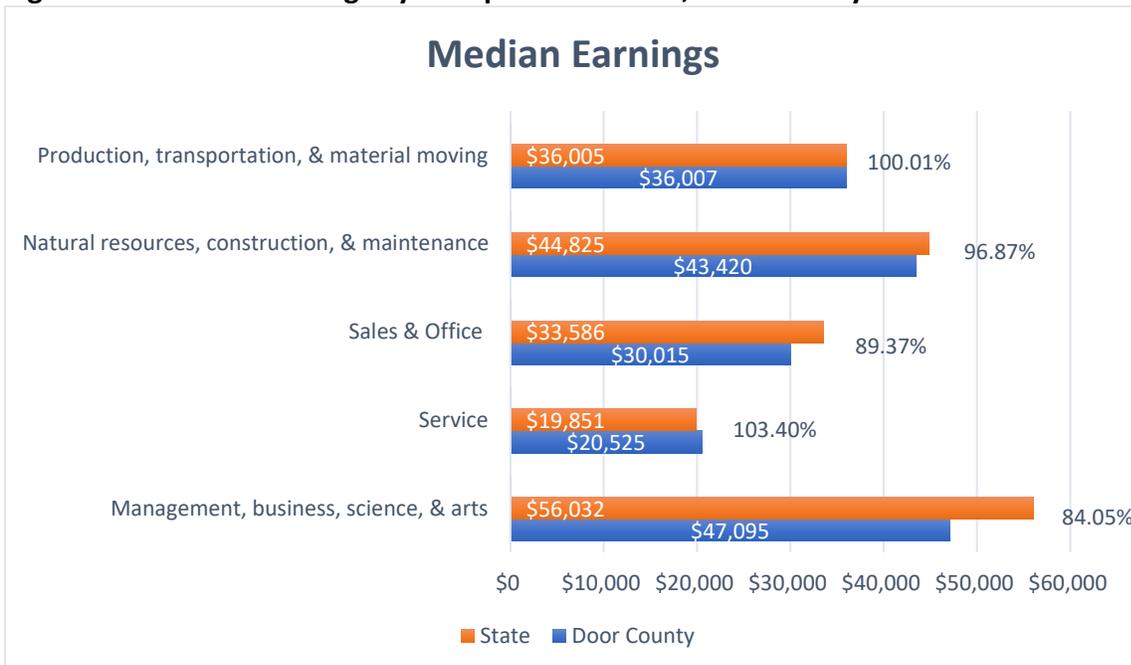
**Table 5.6: Employed Person by Occupation Division, Door County**

Occupation Division	2010-2020			
	2010	2020	# Change	% Change
Management, business, science, & arts	4,466	4,758	292	6.54%
Service	2,783	2,198	-585	-21.02%
Sales & Office	3,370	2,785	-585	-17.36%
Natural resources, construction, & maintenance	1,894	1,625	-269	-14.20%
Production, transportation, & material moving	2,107	2,353	246	11.68%
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,620</b>	<b>13,719</b>	<b>-901</b>	<b>-6.16%</b>

Source: US Census Bureau, Occupation, for years cited. See American Community Survey Table ID S2401.

Median wages in Door County fall below the state’s median wages for all occupation divisions except the “service” division and the “production, transportation, and material moving” division. (See Figure 5.3.) The fact that Door County pays more than the rest of the state for its “service” occupations coincides with the county’s reputation as a premier resort destination. Compared to the state, the lowest-paying occupation divisions in the county are the “management, business, science, and arts” division, at 84.05% of the state’s median, and the “sales and office” division, at 89.37% of the state’s median.

**Figure 5.3: Median Earnings by Occupation Division, Door County**



Source: US Census Bureau, Occupation and Income. See American Community Survey Table ID B24011.

**MAJOR EMPLOYERS**

Table 5.7 lists the top 15 employers in Door County in terms of total number of employees, regardless of number of hours worked per week, as reported by the Wisconsin DWD WisConomy database. Public sector employers on the list include the county itself and three of the county’s five local public school districts. The private industries on the list are from a number of different sectors, including manufacturing, health care, and banking. Bay Shipbuilding and Door County Medical Center are the largest private employers, both employing between 500 and 999 workers.



Pictured: WisConomy logo

Source: WisConomy

**Table 5.7: Top 15 Employers, Door County**

Largest Employers	Type of Business	# of Employees (range)
Fincantieri Bay Shipbuilding	Boat Building	500-999
Door County Medical Center	General Medical & Surgical Hospitals	500-999
Door County Government Center	Legislative Bodies	250-499
Wire Tech Fabricators Inc	All Other Miscellaneous Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	100-249
Gibraltar Area School District	Elementary & Secondary Schools	100-249
Al Johnson Swedish Restaurant	Full-Service Restaurants	100-249
Good Samaritan	Other Social Advocacy Organizations	100-249
Tadych's	Supermarkets & Other Grocery Stores	100-249
Nicolet National Bank	Commercial Banking	100-249
Landmark Resort	All Other Traveler Accommodation	100-249
Good Samaritan	Other Social Advocacy Organizations	100-249
Sevastopol Elementary School	Elementary & Secondary Schools	100-249
Southern Door Elementary	Elementary & Secondary Schools	100-249
Target	Department Stores	100-249
Door County YMCA	Child and Youth Services	100-249

Source: WI Department of Workforce Development, WisConomy database, queried July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

## COUNTY-LEVEL PERSONAL INCOME AND EARNINGS

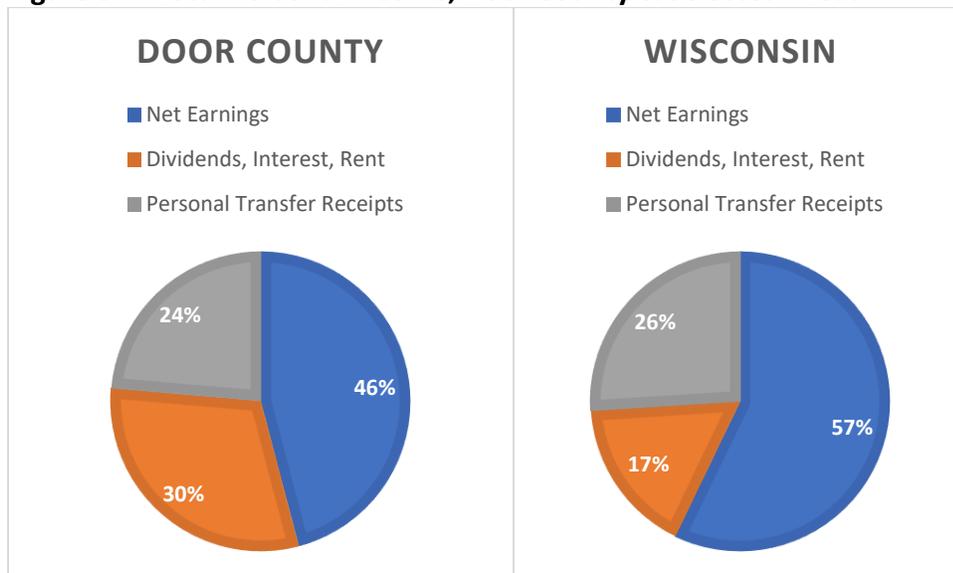
*Note: All dollar values are inflation-adjusted to 2019 or 2020, as noted. Also, for the Median Income and Earnings sections, individual municipalities within Door County are grouped together into Northern Door, Central Door, and Southern Door categories. The Northern Door area consists of the Towns of Baileys Harbor, Egg Harbor, Gibraltar, Jacksonport, Liberty Grove, and Washington; and the Villages of Egg Harbor, Ephraim, and Sister Bay. The Central Door area consists of the Towns of Sevastopol, Sturgeon Bay, and Nasewaupee; and the City of Sturgeon Bay. The Southern Door area consists of the Towns of Brussels, Clay Banks, Forestville, Gardner, and Union; and the Village of Forestville.*

### **TOTAL PERSONAL INCOME**

Total personal income consists of three types of income: net earnings; dividends, interest, and rent; and personal transfer receipts (money received from the government, such as Social Security). According to the DWD, 2020 net earnings accounted for 45.91% of the total personal income of Door County residents compared to 57.16% for the state, and 59.92% for the nation. (See Figure 5.4.) Door County ranked 43<sup>rd</sup> out of 72 counties in Wisconsin for net earnings.

“Dividends, interest, and rents” accounted for approximately 30.46% of the county’s total person income, compared to just 16.83% for the state. Door County’s larger “dividends, interest, and rents” total reflects the greater number of retirees living in the county compared to the rest of the state. The remaining 23.63% of total personal income for Door County consists of personal transfer receipts.

**Figure 5.4: Total Personal Income, Door County & Selected Areas**



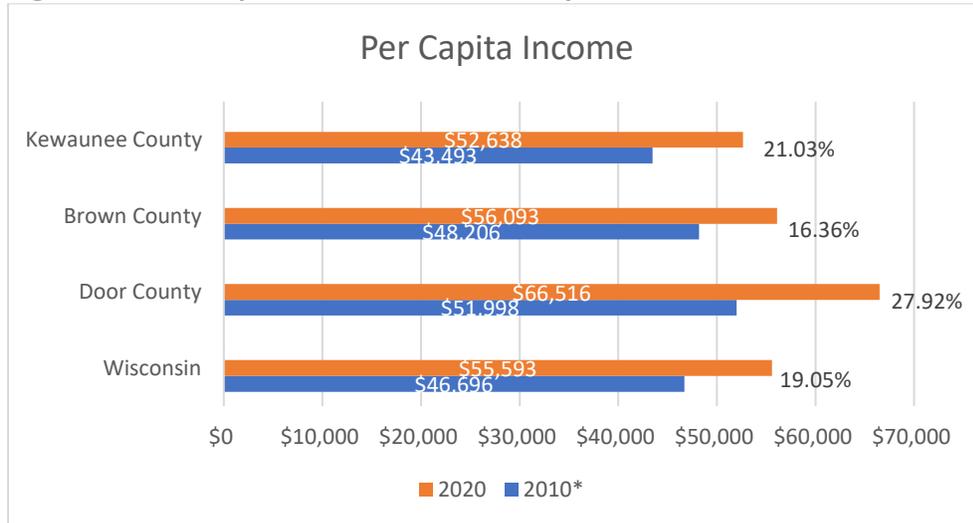
Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2020.

**PER CAPITA INCOME**

As explained briefly in the beginning of this chapter, Per Capita Income (PCI) is calculated by adding together all sources of personal income received by all persons in an area, and dividing that number by the number of persons in the county, regardless of age or employment status.

Figure 5.5 displays 2010 and 2020 PCI for Door County, neighboring counties, and the state. In 2010, Door County had the highest PCI, with Brown County and the state in second and third, respectively. Throughout the decade, Door County’s PCI grew at the fastest rate, at 27.92%, far exceeding Brown County’s and Kewaunee County’s rates of 16.36% and 21.03%, respectively. The state had a PCI growth rate of 19.05% between 2010 and 2020. In 2020, Door County had the highest PCI at \$66,516, a fact that can be at least partially attributed to the significant number of seasonal homeowners who have retired over the past decade and made Door County their year-round home.

**Figure 5.5: Per Capita Income, Door County & Selected Areas**



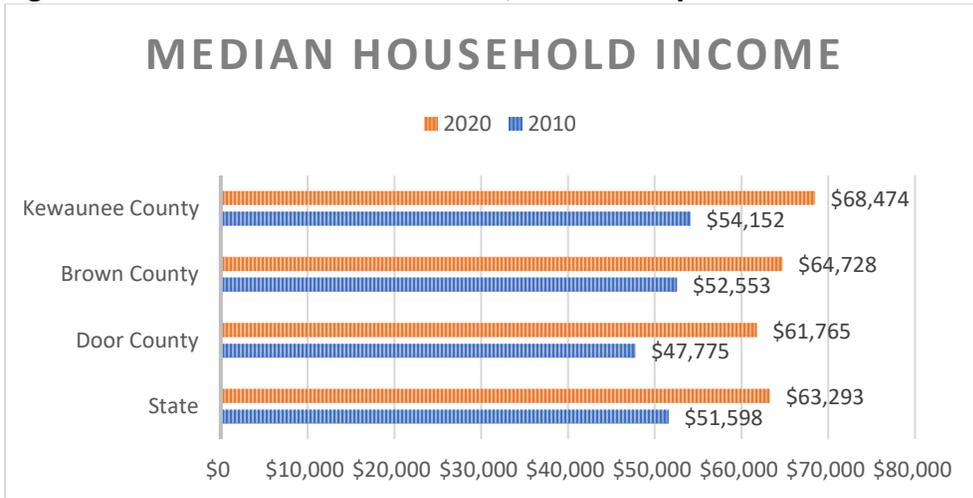
Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis, for years cited.

\*Inflation-adjusted to 2020.

**MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

The 2020 median household income (sum of all personal income for household occupants 15 years and older) for Door County was \$61,765, an increase of \$13,085 (26.88%) from the median income of \$47,775 in 2010. (See Figure 5.6.) In both 2010 and 2020, Door County had the lowest median household income when compared to Brown and Kewaunee counties and the state. For this same timeframe, all three counties and the state experienced an increase in median household income, growing between approximately 22% and 29%, with Door County increasing the most at 29.28%.

**Figure 5.6: Median Household Income, Door County and Selected Areas**

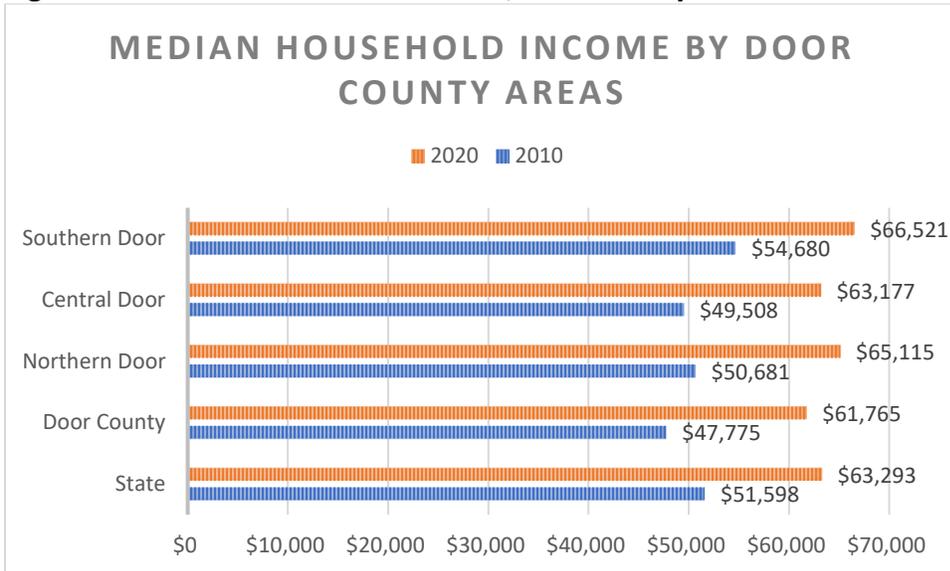


Source: US Census Bureau, *Income & Poverty*, for years cited. See *American Community Survey Table ID S1903*.

*\*Inflation-adjusted to 2019.*

Figure 5.7 shows 2010 and 2020 median household incomes for the state, county, and sub-county areas. Between 2010 and 2020, the state’s median household income increased by 22.67%, compared to an increase of 29.28% for the county. In 2010, Southern Door had the highest median income, at \$54,680, followed by Northern Door at \$50,681 and Central Door at \$49,508. The median incomes of Door County sub-areas in 2020 followed a similar pattern: Southern Door with the highest at \$66,521, followed by Northern Door at \$65,115, and Central Door at \$63,177. (See Figure 5.7.) Between 2010 and 2020, Northern Door experienced the largest growth rate of median household income, at 28.48%, followed by Central Door, at 27.61%, and Southern Door, at 21.66%.

**Figure 5.7: Median Household Income, Door County Areas**



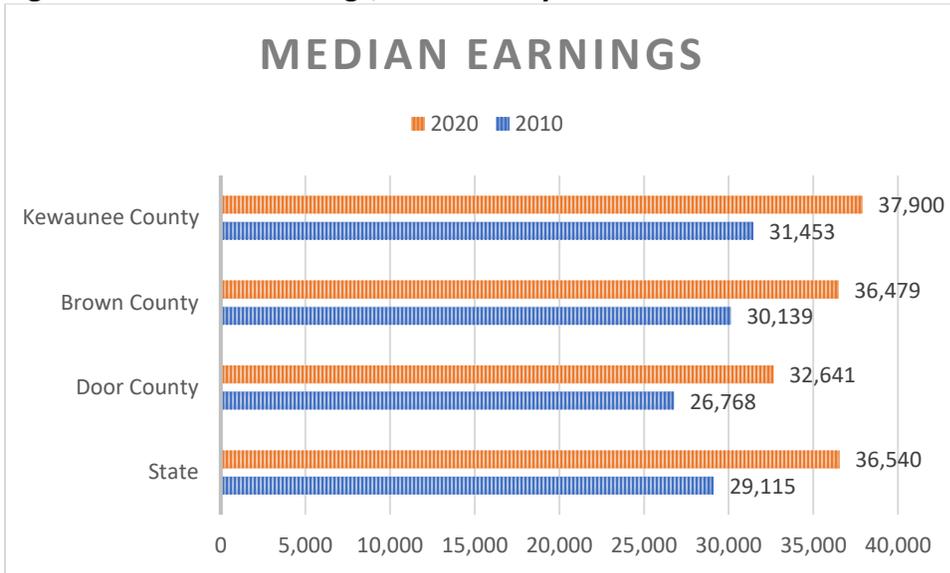
Source: US Census Bureau, *Income & Poverty*. See American Community Survey Table ID S1903.  
 \*Inflation adjusted to 2020.

**EARNINGS INCOME**

Earnings are defined as the sum of wage or salary income and net income from self-employment. Median earnings for Door County residents age 16 and over were \$32,641 in 2020, significantly less than neighboring counties and the state. (See Figure 5.8.) Between 2010 and 2020, Door, Brown, and Kewaunee Counties had an increase in median earnings, 21.94%, 21.04%, and 20.50%, respectively. The state experienced an increase of 25.50% in median earnings.

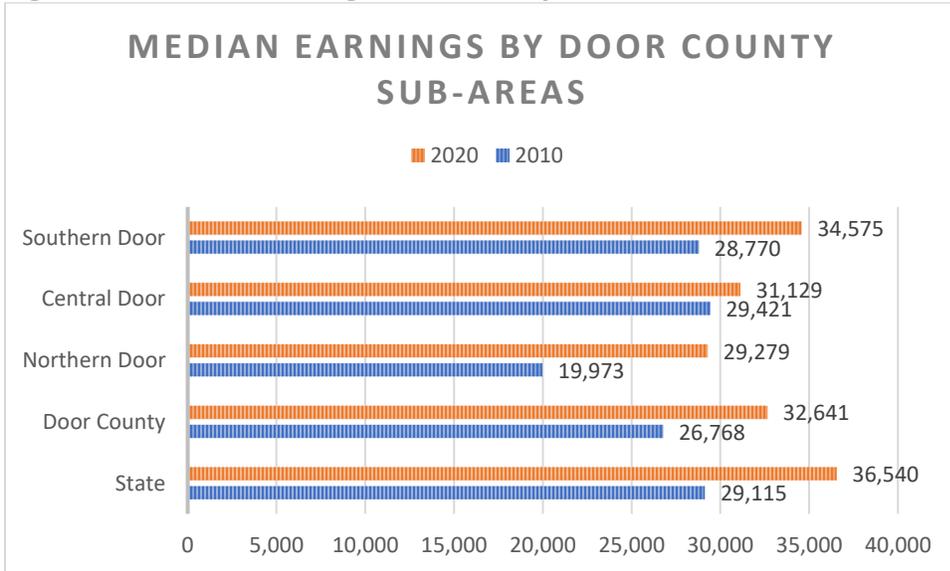
Figure 5.9 shows median earnings for the state, county, and sub-county areas in 2010 and 2020. In 2020, Southern Door had the highest median income earnings, at \$34,575, followed by Central Door, \$31,129, and Northern Door, \$29,279. Between 2010 and 2020, Northern Door experienced the largest increase in median earnings of \$9,306 (46.59%), followed by Southern Door, \$5,805 (20.18%), and Central Door, \$1,708 (5.81%).

**Figure 5.8: Median Earnings, Door County and Selected Areas**



Source: US Census Bureau, Income & Poverty. See American Community Survey Table ID S2001.  
\*Inflation adjusted to 2020.

**Figure 5.9: Median Earnings, Door County Areas**



Source: US Census Bureau, Income & Poverty. See American Community Survey Table ID S2001.  
\*Inflation adjusted to 2020.

**EARNINGS, MEN VERSUS WOMEN**

Table 5.8 illustrates the differences in earnings between men and women in 2020. There are more males than females with earnings, with males paid both higher median and mean earnings. In the “population 16 years and over with earnings” category, males earn 50.05%

more in median earnings. In the “full-time, year-round workers with earnings” category, males earn 24.21% more in median earnings and 36.62% more in average earnings.

**Table 5.8: Earnings by Sex, Door County**

Earnings	Total	Male	Female
<b>Population 16 years and over with earnings</b>	15,556	8,342	7,214
Median earnings (dollars)	32,641	40,091	26,719
<b>Full-time, year-round workers with earnings</b>	<b>8,926</b>	<b>5,365</b>	<b>3,561</b>
\$1 to \$9,999 or loss	2.20%	2.50%	1.90%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	2.80%	3.50%	1.70%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	9.50%	6.90%	13.50%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	14.30%	10.40%	20.20%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	25.00%	23.70%	27.00%
\$50,000 to \$64,999	21.10%	23.60%	17.30%
\$65,000 to \$74,999	6.90%	8.30%	4.80%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	8.50%	9.10%	7.60%
\$100,000 or more	9.70%	12.10%	6.00%
Median earnings (dollars)	46,372	51,599	41,541
Mean earnings (dollars)	58,528	65,536	47,970

Source: US Census Bureau, *Income & Poverty*. See American Community Survey Table ID S2001.

Within the income categories shown in Table 5.8, a higher percentage of women made more “earnings” in all income categories from \$15,000 up to \$49,999. From \$50,000 and above, men outnumber women in all income categories, with 53.10% of men earning \$50,000 or above compared to only 35.70% for women.

## POVERTY STATUS

According to the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD), the 2020 Federal Poverty Guidelines for a family/household of 2 people (the average number of people per household) was an annual income of approximately \$17,240. This level is adjusted for the number of adults (18+) in a household or if there are dependents under 18 in a household.

The US Census Bureau reported that roughly 8.3% of Door County’s year-round population was living below poverty levels in 2020. Breaking it down by age, those under the age of 18 have the highest share of residents below the poverty level, at 12.6%. Around 9% of working age residents (18 to 64) and 4.7% of 65+ residents are living below the poverty level.

Approximately 8.10% of all male residents and 8.30% of all female residents are living below the poverty level. (See Table 5.9.)

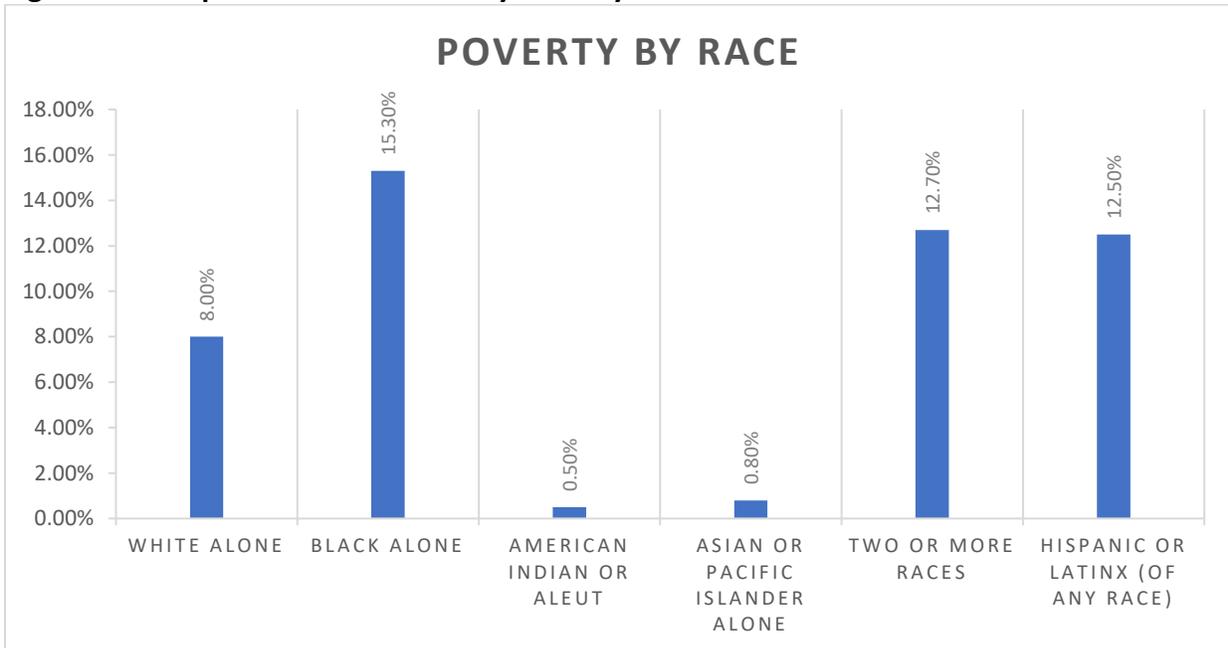
**Table 5.9: Population Below Poverty Level by Age Group and Sex**

Age	Percent below poverty level
Under 18	12.60%
18 to 64	9.00%
65+	4.70%
Sex	
Male	8.10%
Female	8.30%

Source: US Census Bureau, Income & Poverty. See American Community Survey Table ID S1701.

Poverty is also experienced differently among different races and ethnicities in Door County. Around 8.0% of the “white alone” population lives below the poverty level. The largest share of those living below the poverty level is among the Black alone population, at a 15.3% poverty rate. The two or more races and Hispanic or Latinx populations experience 12.7% and 12.5% poverty rates, respectively. The Asian or Pacific Islander and the American Indian or Aleut populations have 0.8% and 0.5% residents living below the poverty level, respectively. (See Figure 5.10.)

**Figure 5.10: Population Below Poverty Level by Race**



Source: US Census Bureau, Income & Poverty. See American Community Survey Table ID S1701.

## **LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS**

This section provides information on the county's labor force, including labor force participation and unemployment rates, education levels, and commuting patterns.

### **LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE**

According to the DWD and WisConomy, approximately 60.7% of Door County's population age 16 and older participated in the labor force in 2020, nearly 6 percentage points down from 2010, at 66.6%. This percentage is an economic measure referred to as the labor force participation rate (LFPR). The DWD considers the LFPR a better indicator of an area's labor market health than its unemployment rate, partly because it counts individuals not participating in the labor force either due to age or a lack of skills. An unemployment rate counts only those individuals who are in the labor force, either working or looking for work. The LFPR counts individuals who do not have the skills that the job market requires and have taken themselves out of the labor force. These individuals are part of what economists call the "skills gap," a phrase used to describe the shortage of skills available within the labor force that employers are seeking.

Door County's 2020 LFPR of 60.7% was less than the state's LFPR of 65.5% and the national LFPR of 61.8%. It is important to note the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the LFPR at all geographic levels, and labor forces are currently recovering. According to the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, Door County's labor force increased from 15,125 people in 2020 to 15,656 people in 2021. Additionally, the national labor force participation rate has increased to 62.3% as of May 2022, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. The US Department of Labor projects the national 2029 LFPR for women to be 56.6% and for men to be 66.1%.

### **UNEMPLOYMENT RATE**

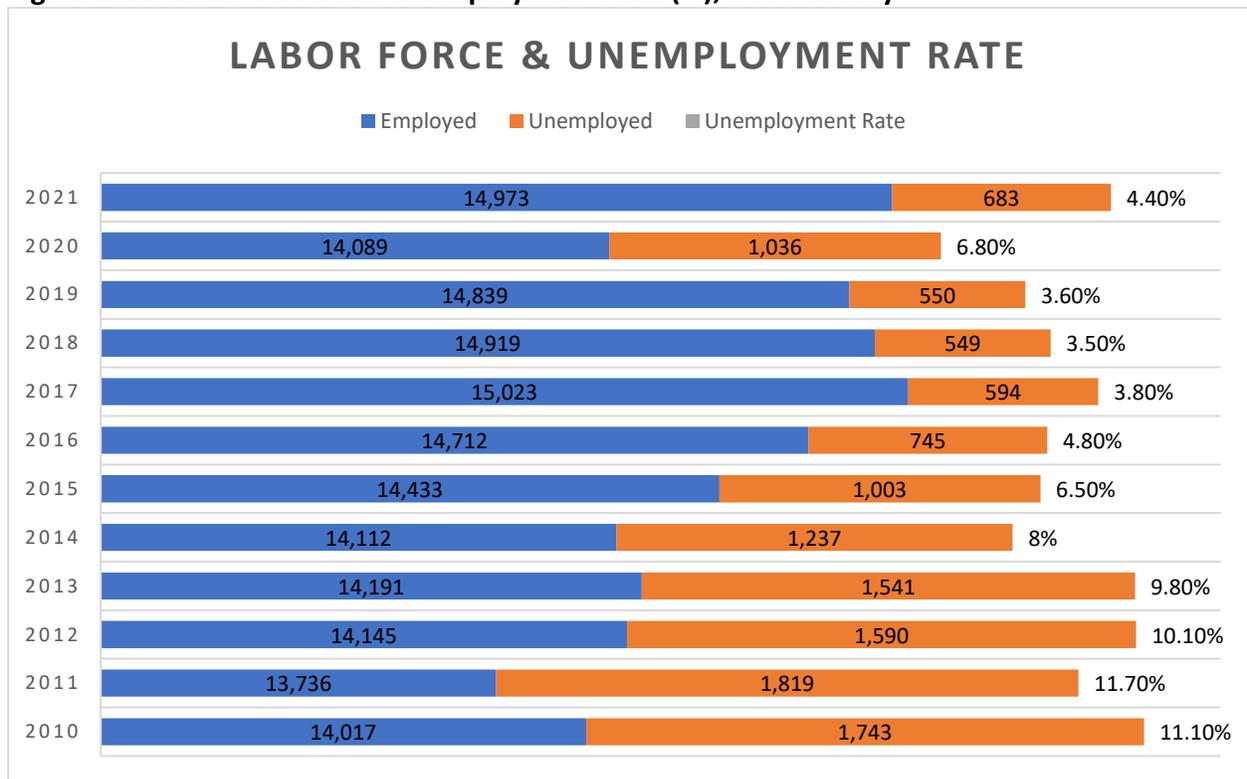
The unemployment rate represents the number of unemployed persons as a percent of the labor force. Unemployment rates are calculated by a variety of agencies in a variety of ways. Figure 5.11 gives the unemployment rates for Door County between 2010 and 2022, as estimated by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics – Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program and reported by the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. To estimate in Wisconsin, the LAUS program uses models which combine current and historical data from the Current Population Survey, the Current Employment Statistics program, the state Unemployment Insurance system, the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages program, and the Decennial Census. More information on the LAUS program's methodology for determining unemployment statistics can be found on their website, listed in the Resources and Further Information Section at the end of this chapter.

Between 2010 and 2021, the county's total labor force saw a net decrease of 104 workers, or -0.66%, for a total of 15,656 workers (employed plus unemployed). Between 2010 and 2021, the county's unemployment rate averaged 6.26%, with 2011 experiencing the highest unemployment rate of 11.70%. The county hit its peak labor force in 2010, when there were

15,760 workers, but the unemployment rate was also high, at 11.10%. The labor force experienced a loss of 264 workers from 2019 to 2020, which can be highly attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic. During this same timeframe, the unemployment rate nearly doubled from 3.60% in 2019 to 6.80% in 2020. However, the 2021 labor force bounced back, reaching a total of 15,656 workers and seeing a lower unemployment rate of 4.40%. Therefore, the county experienced a 3.51% increase in the labor force in just one year.

The state’s labor force increased by approximately 52,600 workers, or 1.7%, between 2010 and 2021, with an average unemployment rate of 5.23%. The state’s lowest unemployment rate was in 2018, at 3.00%, and its highest unemployment rate was in 2010, at 8.5%. As of May 2022, the Wisconsin unemployment rate was at 2.9%.

**Figure 5.11: Labor Force and Unemployment Rate (%), Door County**



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, for years cited.

**EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT**

In 2020, around 31.29% of the county’s residents 25 to 65 years of age had a high school diploma or equivalent, significantly higher than that of the state, at 27.39%. (See Table 5.10.) Door County also had a larger share of residents with “some college or associates degree,” at 34.54%, than the state, at 33.25%. Just over 30% of Door County residents had “bachelor’s degree or higher,” roughly 3 percentage points less than the state, at 32.68%.

**Table 5.10: Educational Attainment, 25 to 64 Years of Age, Door County & Wisconsin**

Education Level	Door County		Wisconsin	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than high school graduate	556	4.15%	200,064	6.67%
High school graduate	4,196	31.29%	821,590	27.39%
Some college or associate's degree	4,632	34.54%	997,342	33.25%
Bachelor's degree or higher	4,025	30.02%	980,323	32.68%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>13409</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>2,999,319</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Source: US Census Bureau, Education. See American Community Survey Table ID S2301.

Looking at educational attainment by employment status, Door County has a higher percentage of individuals than the state with a “high school education” participating in the workforce. (See Table 5.11.) This may be due to the higher number of leisure and hospitality jobs, which generally do not require advanced education. Door County has a lower percentage than the state of individuals between the ages of 25 and 64 participating in the workforce with “some college or associate’s degree” and “bachelor’s degree or higher.” This indicates a possible opportunity loss because there is a pool of working-age individuals with higher education living in the county who are either choosing not to work or who have given up finding employment. Thus, the knowledge typically associated with higher education that exists in the county may not be benefitting the county’s economy.

**Table 5.11: Educational Attainment by Employment Status, 25-64 Years of Age, Door County & Wisconsin**

Education Level	Door County		Wisconsin	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Less than high school graduate</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>4.15%</b>	<b>200,064</b>	<b>6.67%</b>
In labor force:	437	78.50%	129,441	64.70%
Not in labor force:	119	21.50%	70,623	35.30%
<b>High school graduate:</b>	<b>4,196</b>	<b>31.29%</b>	<b>821,590</b>	<b>27.39%</b>
In labor force:	3,567	85.00%	660,558	80.40%
Not in labor force:	629	15.00%	161,032	19.60%
<b>Some college or associate's degree:</b>	<b>4,632</b>	<b>34.54%</b>	<b>997,342</b>	<b>33.25%</b>
In labor force:	3,817	82.40%	848,738	85.10%
Not in labor force:	815	17.60%	148,604	14.90%
<b>Bachelor's degree or higher:</b>	<b>4,025</b>	<b>30.02%</b>	<b>980,323</b>	<b>32.68%</b>
In labor force:	3,313	82.30%	816,704	87.90%
Not in labor force:	712	17.70%	13,619	12.10%

<b>Total:</b>	<b>13,409</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>2,999,319</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
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Source: US Census Bureau, Education. See American Community Survey Table ID S2301.

### **COMMUTING PATTERNS**

In 2015, 10,999 of the 12,970 employed Door County residents worked within Door County. For the same year, 1,972 employed Door County residents commuted out of the county for work. (See Table 5.12.) Door County's commuting residents primarily traveled to the neighboring counties of Brown and Kewaunee for work, although many also traveled to Manitowoc, Outagamie, Clark, and Milwaukee Counties.

**Table 5.12: Commute-To Location of Employed Door Co. Residents**

Location	# of Commuters
Brown County	930
Kewaunee County	504
Manitowoc County	137
Outagamie County	56
Clark County	42
Milwaukee County	30
All Other Locations	273
<b># of Residents Commuting outside of Door Co.</b>	<b>1,972</b>

Source: US Census Bureau, 2011-2015 5-Year Commuting Flows. See American Community Survey Table ID S0801.

There are 1,348 workers from other Midwest counties who travel into Door County to work, primarily coming from Kewaunee and Brown Counties (see Table 5.13).

**Table 5.13: Commute-From Location of People Working in Door Co.**

Location	# of Commuters
Kewaunee County, WI	678
Brown County, WI	375
Menominee County, MI	47
Milwaukee County, WI	40
Manitowoc County, WI	21
All Other Locations	187
<b># of Non-Resident Workers</b>	<b>1,348</b>

Source: US Census Bureau, 2011-2015 5-Year Commuting Flows. See American Community Survey Table ID S0801.

## BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL (RE)DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

Economic development activities typically involve at least one of four components: 1) infrastructure improvements; 2) business development; 3) workforce development; and 4) increasing community cash flow. The Door County Economic Development Corporation (DCEDC), established in 1989, is primarily tasked with these activities and any other economic development issues facing the area. In 2005, DCEDC published the Door County Economic Development Adjustment Plan (EDAP), which provides descriptions of potential market opportunities, demographic and economic analysis, and seven strategic recommendations regarding economic development for the county. These strategies are to:



Pictured: Door County Economic Development Corporation (DCEDC) logo  
Source: *WisConomy*

- Create high-paying year-round jobs by retaining and attracting a skilled workforce, ensuring a long-term competitive advantage to businesses in Door County.
- Expand existing businesses and business clusters that have market and growth opportunities.
- Tap into the visitor, seasonal resident, and retiree populations as sources of entrepreneurship and new business information.
- Establish and implement economic development strategies that will reduce the seasonality of the county's economy, create a better balance in the economy, and are consistent with maintaining the quality of life and the natural environment
- Create economic development and opportunity around future demographic trends for the County.
- Improve the county's basic physical and business infrastructure including bridges, telecommunications, capital formation, the power grid, business networks, and business support systems.
- Attract younger families as permanent residents of Door County to increase the talent pool, create better balance in the future age distribution, and maintain a high level of energy in the County.

The EDAP focuses on the eight market opportunities listed below. It also recommends the intersection of these specific markets with general demographic groups such as seasonal residents, high-end destination tourists, and the aging population.

- Manufacturing/shipbuilding
- Healthcare
- Marine Services
- Professional/financial services
- Arts
- Environmental education and services

- Agriculture
- Construction

### **INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT**

Community infrastructure is necessary for an effective business support system. Types of community infrastructure include:

- Utilities (e.g., water, sanitary and storm sewer, electric, natural and other gas)
- Transportation services (e.g., roads, parking lots, airports, ports, rail, signage, sidewalks, trails)
- Social infrastructure (e.g., schools, hospitals, government, and other public services)
- Communications infrastructure (e.g., internet, telephone, radio, television, video, satellite, cellular)

Specific types of infrastructure found in Door County, discussed below, are the Sturgeon Bay Industrial Park, incubator space, and high-speed Internet access. More about utilities, communications, and social infrastructure development issues for Door County can be found in Chapter 8, Community Facilities and Utilities; more about transportation issues can be found in Chapter 9, Transportation.

### **STURGEON BAY INDUSTRIAL PARK**

The Sturgeon Bay Industrial Park, located on the southwest side of the City of Sturgeon Bay, has over 380 acres, with approximately 43 acres still available for development. City-owned industrial property is priced at \$30,000 per acre; incentive credits can be earned during the 3-year finance term if jobs are created or real estate improvements are made. The City offers incentive financing on the purchase of industrial park land with a 0% interest, 3-year loan, and \$10,000 per-acre down payment. Job creation credits of \$4,000 per job are earned for each new full-time equivalent position that pays at least \$15.00 per hour, exclusive of benefits. Real estate investment credits of \$4,000 can be earned for each \$100,000 in real estate improvements. Other incentives available include low-interest Revolving Loan Funds.

### **BUSINESS INCUBATOR**

The Business Development Center is a small business incubator located in the Sturgeon Bay Industrial Park. Tenants pay competitive rents and share services and equipment, allowing them to keep overhead costs low. The average stay in the Business Development Center is between three and five years. With 32,000 square feet, the Center can accommodate a variety of business. Available equipment and services include:

- Recessed and at-grade truck docks
- Forklift and material handling equipment
- Copier, fax, and mail services
- Private conference room with audiovisual equipment
- Business finance training and consulting

A number of finance and incentive programs are also available, including revolving loan fund programs, development zone tax incentives, and financing eligibility and application assistance.

### **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

Business development refers to business retention, expansion, attraction, and start-up activities. A business retention and expansion program identifies and monitors the existing and changing needs of core employers. It also helps existing businesses remain competitive by appropriately removing or offsetting any obstacles that restrict their growth and through the establishment of workforce development programs, integration of technology, and other initiatives. Business attraction activities are designed to create a competitive and attractive environment for new businesses looking to relocate. Marketing activities promote such attributes as a positive business climate, key quality of life elements, skill level of the workforce, and available services. New business development helps to diversify and stabilize the economic base by creating new jobs. Workforce development programs in Door County are discussed in further detail below.

The DCEDC works with existing businesses on an ongoing basis to determine the health and strength of the local economy. The DCEDC staff and volunteer members serve on a Business Retention committee that works to make local companies stronger by identifying and helping to address their business needs. Staff members also meet with area business owners and leaders to discuss and figure out methods to address a number of business retention topics:

- Issues with government
- Resources that foster business success
- Information for appropriate policymakers
- Trends affecting local business conditions

In addition to its full-time staff, DCEDC partners with a counselor from the Small Business Development Center at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay to provide one-on-one counseling to individuals interested in starting a business in Door County. DCEDC also co-sponsors an annual 8-week entrepreneurial training program, taking students step by step through the process of writing a business plan. The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation offers two grant opportunities for the creation of business plans for new businesses.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted many small businesses throughout the county, as most Door County businesses have fewer than four employees. To aid in minimizing the impact, DCEDC worked to receive an EDA grant of \$550,000 to provide a revolving loan fund for small businesses in the Door County area. Additional small business retention funding is provided by the Wisconsin Tomorrow Small Business Recovery Grant program, \$420 million to be administered by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) in collaboration with the WEDC. The DOR explains that the purpose of this program is intended to support businesses “who are hardest hit by the pandemic and are key to Wisconsin making a strong recovery.” DCEDC also

administers multiple business financing programs, descriptions of which can be found on their website, listed in the Resources and Further Information section at the end of this chapter.

### **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Healthy economies need a well-rounded workforce to stay competitive, keep existing businesses strong, retain young people, and raise the area's general standard of living. Generally, workforce development programs are conducted through partnerships with local job centers, local school districts, and institutions of higher education. Occasionally, local employees will provide instructors and equipment for use in these training programs.

Door County's EDAP states that the number one threat to the county's economic future is the projected labor force, which is expected to decline over the next 15 years. The county still has a good base of workers with strong skills, work ethic, and productivity, especially in manufacturing, shipbuilding, and construction. However, employers in both the northeast Wisconsin region and Door County are concerned because a high proportion of their workers are in their 50s and 60s, close to retirement. The retirement is likely to leave a dearth of experienced and appropriately trained workers.

Multiple efforts to address both the projected labor shortage and gap in job skills have been put into motion by DCEDC in partnership with local businesses and state, regional, and local agencies. As described earlier in this chapter, the Bay Area Workforce Development Board works in ten counties, including Door County, allocating and coordinating resources to address community workforce needs. DCEDC also oversees a Workforce Taskforce, a "coalition of 30 area human resource managers, business owners, and other concerned organizations and individuals." The Taskforce develops and implements an annual work plan to address workforce needs. Past initiatives have included: conducting annual wage surveys, educational and skills training sessions, and employer needs assessments.

### **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

DCEDC also provides the following workforce development initiatives:

- **Business & Education Partnership.** The motto for this program is "education is everybody's business." This program serves as an access point for business and education connections and provides referral services to match business and education needs and resources. The Partnership strives to ensure all Door County students have the skills and behaviors necessary to be successful in the workforce or continuing education.
- **NexGen Young Professionals Network.** NexGen Door County was launched in 2015 to help connect young professions with each other, mentors, other businesses, and helpful information and resources for living and working in the county. The Network offers a regular schedule of events, including professional development, community service projects, and social gatherings.

- **Resources for Hiring Veterans.** DCEDC provides an employer guide to hiring veterans as a resource for businesses in Door County looking to support veterans finding meaningful employment. The guide provides programs and resources that connect employers with veterans, as well as highlights financial benefits that are available, such as grants and tax credits, for hiring veterans.

Additional workforce development programs offered in the county include:

- **Door County Job Center.** The mission of the Door County Job Center is to help county residents achieve and maintain quality employment, and to partner with employers to obtain and maintain a well-trained and qualified workforce. Their goal is to make the recruitment, hiring, and training process easier and more efficient for businesses and job seekers, thereby reducing everyone’s costs and time.
- **Sunshine House, Inc.** Since 1971, the Sunshine House Inc. has been providing services to Door County residents with special needs and/or disabilities. Employment services offered include work for pay opportunities that offer a variety of jobs at a pace and skill level adapted to the individual. Much of the work involves mailing services and packaging/assembly. Other activities designed to employ clients in the community include assessments to determine vocational interests and capabilities, job placement, and support in maintaining employment.

### **COMMUNITY CASH FLOW**

Increasing a community’s cash flow can positively affect its economic development activities. Individuals moving into an area increases cash flow by bringing in earned income (wage and salary) or transfer income (government payments and investment dividends); or, existing residents may also increase earned or transfer income levels. Organizations or governments can also increase cash flow with new incoming funds, such as increased tourism revenue, increased aid or shared revenues for governmental services, and new contracts, grants, or investments for public and private ventures. Likewise, new business ventures, whether creation of new businesses, jobs, buildings, infrastructure improvements, or other investments, bring new cash flow into a community.

While a variety of bank loans and other debt programs are available to businesses, such programs are often targeted at businesses with existing assets as collateral. The Wisconsin Angel Network strives to increase the number and amount of early stage equity investments in Wisconsin start-ups by offering services to create and strengthen angel networks and to enhance cooperation among early-stage investors. For communities competing for new or relocating/expanding professional firms and high-tech businesses that pay high wages – such businesses seen by many as having more potential than traditional manufacturing businesses – the availability of such “high-risk” capital is an important factor. Access to high-risk capital has been identified as a major weakness for Door County, as well as the region, as it seeks to attract new businesses.

A county also has the ability to take on development and infrastructure projects needed to attract new business through debt financing. The ability of a government to finance development and infrastructure projects is calculated by general obligation debt capacity. According to Wisconsin state statutes, the aggregate amount of indebtedness, including existing indebtedness of any municipality, shall not exceed 5% of the equalized value of the taxable property located in the municipality. Door County’s tax base is growing at a steady rate, while the county maintains a manageable debt; therefore, the county has access to considerable financing for future projects such as emergency, technology, facilities, or other infrastructure improvements.

Door County’s debt in 2020 was \$11,680,000, leaving a debt margin of over \$380,000,000, or 97.02%. (See Table 5.14.)

**Table 5.14: Public Indebtedness, Door County**

Year	Full Value	Allowable Debt	Existing Debt	Debt Margin	% of Debt Available
2015	\$6,920,415,400	\$346,020,770	\$11,340,000	\$334,680,770	96.72%
2016	\$7,051,561,200	\$352,578,060	9,540,000	\$343,038,060	97.29%
2017	\$7,113,624,900	\$355,681,245	\$17,695,000	\$337,986,245	95.03%
2018	\$7,220,178,000	\$361,008,900	\$15,740,000	\$345,268,900	95.64%
2019	\$7,532,357,400	\$376,617,870	\$13,730,000	\$362,887,870	96.35%
2020	\$7,843,489,600	\$392,174,480	\$11,680,000	\$380,494,480	97.02%

Source: Wisconsin Department of Revenue, *Municipal Debt Margins*, for years cited.

**ENVIRONMENTALLY CONTAMINATED SITES**

Environmentally contaminated sites can present both issues and opportunities for economic development in a community – sites may be costlier to safely (re)develop, but funding opportunities may be available for cleanup and re-use of those sites.

The DNR’s Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS) is an on-line data base that provides information about contaminated properties and other activities related to the investigation and cleanup of contaminated soil or groundwater in Wisconsin. As of 2023, the BRRTS reports 942 remediation activity cases in Door County, dating back to 1971, with 60 of those classified as “open” (see definition below).

Remediation status categories are as follows:

- Open – Spills, LUST, ERP, VPLE, and Abandoned Container activities in need of cleanup or where cleanup is still underway.
- Closed – Activities where investigation and cleanup of the contamination has been completed and the state has approved all cleanup actions.

- Conditionally Closed – Activities where cleanup actions were approved, but the site closure will not be approved until receipt of documentation of abandonment of wells or disposal of soil.
- Historic Spill – Spills where cleanups may have been completed prior to 1996; no end date is shown for these cases.

Remediation activity types reported as occurring in Door County are:

- Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) – A LUST site has contaminated soil and/or groundwater with petroleum, which includes toxic and cancer-causing substances. The DNR reports 142 LUST sites in Door County, with 6 of those classified as “open.” The remaining 136 cases are classified as “closed.” Many of these open cases involve gas stations.
- Environmental Repair (ERP) – ERP sites are sites other than LUSTs that have contaminated soil and/or groundwater. Examples include industrial spills (or dumping) that need long-term investigation, buried containers of hazardous substances, and closed landfills that have caused contamination. The DNR reports 125 ERP sites in Door County, with 49 of those cases still “open” and the rest “closed.” Most of these open cases involve orchards with arsenic and lead contaminated soils.
- Spills – A discharge of a hazardous substance that may adversely impact, or threaten to impact public health, welfare, or the environment. Spills are usually cleaned up quickly. The DNR reports 537 Spills sites in Door County, with 3 of those cases classified as “historic” and 534 classified as “closed.”
- Voluntary Party Liability Exemption (VPLE) – VPLEs are an elective process in which a property owner conducts an environmental investigation and cleanup of an entire property and then receives limits on future liability for that contamination under s. 292.15, Wis. Stats. The DNR reports 2 open VPLE sites in Door County.

Please refer to the website listed in the Resources and Further Information section for further details on these remediation activity types and their status.

## RESOURCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

### LOCAL & REGIONAL AGENCIES

Bay Area Workforce Development Board ([Home - Bay Area Workforce Development Board \(bayareawdb.org\)](http://bayareawdb.org))

Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission ([Home :: Bay-Lake Region Planning Commission \(baylakerpc.org\)](http://baylakerpc.org))

Destination Door County ([Destination Door County | Door County, Wisconsin](http://destinationdoorcounty.com))

- [2023 Strategic Plan](http://2023strategicplan.com)

Door County Economic Development Corporation ([Door County Economic Development Corporation - LIVE Door County](http://doorcountyeconomicdevelopment.com))

Door County Job Center ([Jobs in Door County | Full-Time and Seasonal Jobs](http://doorcountyjobcenter.com))

Door County Tourism Zone Commission ([Home : Door County Tourism Zone](http://doorcountytourismzone.com))

Fincantieri Bay Shipbuilding ([Shipbuilding & World-Class Shipyards | Fincantieri \(fincantierimarinegroup.com\)](http://fincantierimarinegroup.com))

Lakeshore Industry Cluster Initiative ([Lakeshore Industry Cluster Initiative \(webs.com\)](http://lakeshoreindustrycluster.com))

New North ([New North | Facilitating Economic Growth for NE Wisconsin \(thenewnorth.com\)](http://thenewnorth.com))

NEWERA ([NEWERA \(neweraonline.org\)](http://neweraonline.org))

NEW Manufacturing Alliance ([Home - Northeast Wisconsin Manufacturing Alliance \(newmfgalliance.org\)](http://newmfgalliance.org))

Ninth Coast Guard District ([Station Sturgeon Bay \(uscg.mil\)](http://uscg.mil))

Northeast Wisconsin Technical College ([Soar Higher - Northeast Wisconsin Technical College \(nwtc.edu\)](http://nwtc.edu))

Sunshine House Inc. ([Home - Sunshine Resources of Door County](http://sunshinehouse.com))

University of Wisconsin-Extension, Door County ([Extension Door County – University of Wisconsin-Madison](http://extensiondoorcounty.com))

### STATE AGENCIES

University of Wisconsin-Madison Center for Research on the Wisconsin Economy (<https://crowe.wisc.edu>)

Wisconsin Department of Administration ([DOA Home \(wi.gov\)](http://wi.gov))

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources ([Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources \(DNR\) | Wisconsin DNR](http://dnr.wisconsin.gov))

- Wisconsin DNR Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System ([Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System \(BRRTS\) on the Web | | Wisconsin DNR](http://brrts.dnr.wisconsin.gov))

Wisconsin Department of Revenue ([DOR Wisconsin Department of Revenue Portal](http://dor.wisconsin.gov))

Wisconsin Department of Tourism ([Travel Wisconsin - Official Guide to Wisconsin Tourism](http://travel.wisconsin.gov))

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development ([Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Home](http://wisconsinworkforce.com))

- WisConomy ([Home Page - WisConomy \(jobcenterofwisconsin.com\)](http://jobcenterofwisconsin.com))

**Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation** ([Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation | WEDC](#))

**FEDERAL AGENCIES**

**Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia** ([Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia \(philadelphiafed.org\)](#))

**Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis** ([Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis | Economic Resources & Data \(stlouisfed.org\)](#))

**U.S. Bureau of the Census** ([Census.gov](#))

- **North American Industry Classification System** ([North American Industry Classification System \(NAICS\) U.S. Census Bureau](#))

**U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis** ([U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis \(BEA\)](#))

**U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics** ([U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics \(bls.gov\)](#))

**U.S. Department of Commerce** ([U.S. Department of Commerce](#))

**U.S. Department of Labor** ([Home | U.S. Department of Labor \(dol.gov\)](#))